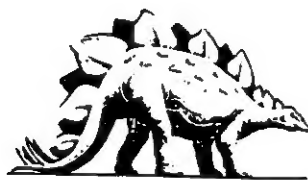


*Forts, Camps & Posts  
& Mining*

# SOME DREAMS DIE

UTAH'S GHOST TOWNS AND LOST TREASURES

BY GEORGE A. THOMPSON



Dream Garden Press  
Great Salt Lake City

Tintic became a boomer when an old Spanish mine was found nearby. Are there still others un-found? -Utah Historical Society-



#### CHAPTER FOUR

### FORTS, CAMPS AND POSTS

When forts of the old west are brought up, one usually pictures the elaborate, polished log garrison of today's TV western, but few early day forts conformed to that image. Most pioneer forts were crudely built of materials readily available, often adobe mud, and were intended only as temporary trading posts or shelter. Forts built by the mountain men and fur traders during the early 1800's were of this type. When Mormon settlers came into Utah, they built forts and walled stockades to protect themselves and their livestock, particularly during the Walker and Blackhawk Indian wars. Some of them, such as Fort Harmony and Fort Santa Clara, were beautifully built of hand cut stone and matched logs, and had well stocked commissaries and comfortable rooms inside. But most Mormon forts were homely places, built of adobe mud mixed with straw. Most were small; Fort Pearce was only 30' square. Fort Deseret, in contrast, was 550' square, with corrals for livestock behind its walls. Some like Fort Kit Carson, are almost unknown today, while others, like Camp Floyd, are known to nearly everyone.

Those old forts were often lonely places, built in remote deserts or canyons to guard now forgotten trails or river crossings. During the Indian wars of the 1850's and 60's almost every settlement had a fort or stockade

for the settlers' protection. Most were torn down when they were no longer needed, providing building stones and logs which in many places are still in use. Many of Utah's old forts can hardly be located today while others, such as Cove Fort, are almost perfectly preserved. Nearly all are ghostly places now, seldom visited or remembered. Most of those described in the following pages can be visited in the family car, but some are beyond road's end, and a few can be reached only by "shank's mare."

Many of Utah's best known lost mine stories are associated with its old forts. Those that have no such tale usually should be remembered for other reasons. With a little imagination a visitor can hear the war-whoop of attacking Indians, and smell the acrid odor of burning gun powder as he stands in the footprints of the mountain men, fur traders, and pioneers who were there before him.

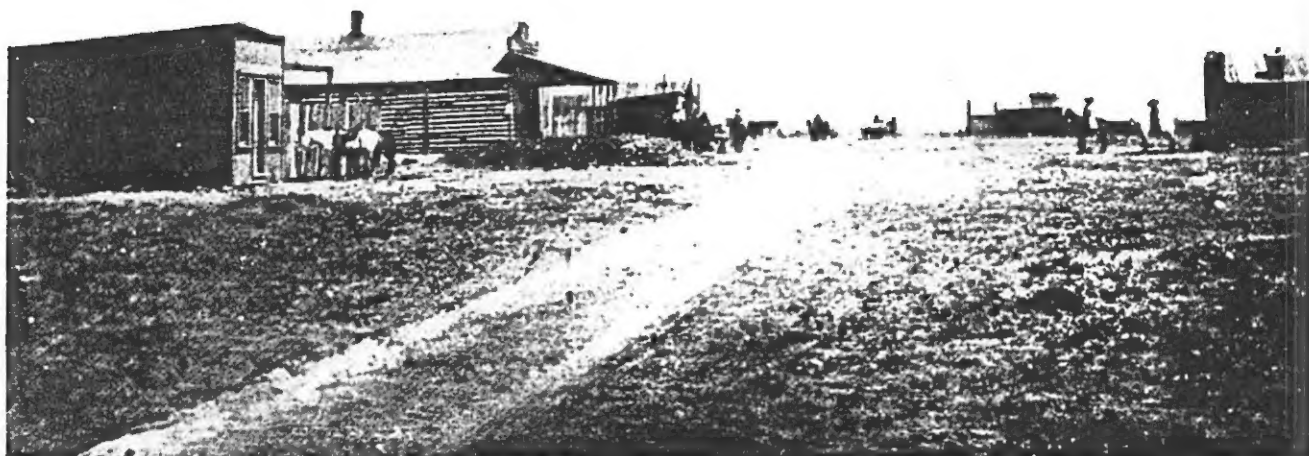
#### FORT ROBIDOUX

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#### THE LOST RHOADES MINE

Other than the nebulous and legendary camps of the Spanish miners, Fort Robidoux was the first white settlement in Utah. It was located where the old Span-

## Roosevelt, Utah, 1907.



The trail to the Lost Rhoades Mine passed through Roosevelt on the Ute Indian reservation. -Utah Historical Society-

ish trail from Taos, New Mexico to the Pacific northwest crossed the fur trade trail from the Platte River to the Timpanogos Valley. It stood alongside the Uintah River  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile east and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles south of the present Ute Indian village of Whiterocks in Uintah County. Fort Robidoux was built in 1831 by Antoine Robidoux on the site of an even earlier fort which mountain men knew as Reed's Fort, named for its builder, fur trapper Jim Reed.

Antoine Robidoux was born September 24th, 1794 at the French settlement of St. Louis, and while a young man gained a reputation as a fur trapper, trail blazer and adventurer. During the early 1820's he built Fort Uncompaghe on the Gunnison River in Colorado. Near the mouth of Westwater Canyon, 15 miles northwest of Westwater Station on the D&RGW Railroad in Grand County, there is an inscription written in French, scratched on the soft sandstone walls above the Colorado River. It states: "Antoine Robidoux passed here November 13th, 1837 to establish a trading post on the river Green or White." That inscription was made six years after Fort Robidoux was established, and indicates that Robidoux planned to build another fort. It also supports the belief that it was he who built the old fort on the Green River now known as Fort Kit Carson.

Fort Robidoux was also known as Fort Uintah or Fort Wintey to mountain men, and was an important trading post at the crossing of the trails most used by fur traders. Many famous explorers and trail blazers visited there, including Miles Goodyear, Rufus Sage, Marcus Whitman and John C. Fremont. Ute Indians can still point out a dugout where Kit Carson spent a winter. It was the most important fort in the area until it was burned during the great Indian uprising of 1844.

In 1842 "Old Joe" Williams, a Methodist preacher turned fur trapper, wrote that he was "appalled by the wickedness of the trappers at Fort Robidoux, with their swearing, drinking and debauchery of the Indians," and added, "They are fat, dirty and idle!" The Ute Indians had been enslaved by Spanish miners for centuries, and fared little better when British and American fur trappers replaced them. Their conditions were so oppressive that in 1844 they rebelled, as they had in the great rebellion of 1680, when they first drove the Spanish miners from the land. Forts and outposts throughout the country were destroyed, and Fort Robidoux wasn't spared. Antoine Robidoux was fortunate enough to be gone when the fort was attacked. He died in St. Louis on August 29, 1860. Today the ruins of old Fort Robidoux are the place to begin the search for Utah's most famous lost mine.

Some lost mine stories are based on legend, or on the hand-me-down tales of old-timers. But the story of the Rhoades Mine is built on more verifiable facts than most. Artifacts in the Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City were made from its gold, and gold coins minted at the Mormon capital also had their origin there. Dozens, if not hundreds, of people were indirectly associated with it, and it is mentioned in church, state, federal and congressional records. There can be no doubt it exists.

As the result of a treaty between Brigham Young and Ute Chief Wakara, beginning in 1855 Thomas Rhoades began bringing gold from an old mine located high in the Uintah Mountains. After Brigham Young and Thomas Rhoades died, Caleb Rhoades secretly continued to bring out gold until he died in 1905.

In 1897 Caleb Rhoades obtained a lease on the ground where he said the mine was located, granted by the Ute Indians who themselves no longer knew where it was, thus revealing the long kept secret that only he and a select few Mormon leaders had known. Under the agreement, the mine could not be worked until the Ute Reservation was opened to settlement. Unfortunately, Caleb Rhoades died on June 2nd, 1905 and the reservation wasn't opened until September, only three months later.

Many, including Utah's congressional delegation, knew of the famous mine and the lease agreement, but no one except Rhoades knew exactly where it was located. The Rhoades Mine story is far too lengthy to repeat here, but if you want to read the fascinating story, obtain a copy of *Footprints In The Wilderness*, by Gale Rhoades, a grandson of Caleb Rhoades.

### FORT DAVY CROCKETT & THE LOST CABIN CACHE

Fort Davy Crockett was one of the first forts in Utah, built in the days of mountain men and fur trappers. It was constructed in 1837 by Phillip Thompson, William Craig and another trapper named St. Clair or Sinclair, on the east side of the Skeetskadee (Green) River, just below its junction with Red Creek at Brown's Hole, in Daggett County. It consisted of three rows of log cabins in the shape of the letter "U", and was protected by adobe walls. It was an important trading post for fur trappers and traders who worked the Brown's Hole country.

In 1825 Brown's Hole was the scene of the first rendezvous of General Ashley's American Fur Company. Fort Davy Crockett provided a place for them to sell their catch and buy supplies as well. The 3,000 Ute Indians who lived in the surrounding mountains also came to trade for knives, hatchets, fish hooks, gun powder and whiskey.

The fort, which was not a pleasant place, was known as Fort Misery. One trapper who spent Christ-

mas there later recalled that an Indian dog was purchased for \$5 worth of trade goods and made what he thought was a fine Christmas dinner! In 1844 Fort Davy Crockett was burned by Ute Indians during the same revolt that saw Fort Robidoux destroyed.

Fourteen hundred \$20 gold double eagles would be worth nearly a million dollars today. That's how many are waiting to be found in a shallow hole in front of a forgotten log cabin, somewhere near Bird Spring atop South Mountain, at the west end of Brown's Hole, not far from old Fort Davy Crockett. Long before Butch Cassidy's Wild Bunch made Brown's Hole famous as a hideout, five Wyoming outlaws robbed a train of \$33,000 in gold coins and led a posse south into Brown's Hole. They lost them in a heavy snow storm, and were forced to hide in the mountains until spring. They built a cabin high on South Mountain near Bird Spring from which they could watch the country below.

The outlaws spent a miserable winter crowded together in a small cabin with only wild game to eat, so when spring came they lost no time heading for town. But they were careful, knowing that the train robbery hadn't been forgotten, and took only \$1,000 apiece. The remaining \$28,000 in shiny gold double eagles was buried under a large pine tree marked with an "X", located straight in line with their cabin door.

Four of the outlaws made a bee-line for the saloons of Rock Springs, while the fifth went to visit his family in Colorado. The outlaws at Rock Springs were recognized, a mob formed outside the saloon where they were drinking, and a gun battle broke out when they refused to surrender. All four were killed. The fifth outlaw was tracked down in Colorado, killed a posseman, and was sentenced to life imprisonment at the Canon City penitentiary.

Fifty years later he was paroled, and as a very old man returned to Brown's Hole. He made several feeble attempts to locate the old cabin and the hidden cache that was then all his, but the country was too rough for him. During the time he searched he stayed with an old sheepherder. When he decided to give up, he told the herder about the cache. He had ridden the mountains there for years and had never seen the old cabin, so he spent no time looking for it.

The train robbers' cache, then, must still be there. All you have to do is find the outlaw cabin, or a large pine tree marked with an "X". But there's one thing you should know. There are an awful lot of pine trees on South Mountain!

### FORT KIT CARSON

There is some controversy over who built the fort opposite the mouth of the Dushesne River on the east bank of the Green River in Uintah County. In Kit Carson's journals he described spending the winter of 1833 at the fort, but didn't claim ownership of it. It's unlikely that Carson built it, for the fort was quite



elaborate, 78' wide and 95' long, with castle-like turrets at its northeast and southwest corners. It could have been a Spanish fort, judging from its architecture, later added onto by Antoine Robidoux, Carson and others.

Kit Carson described it as a small fort when he was there in 1833. But in 1835 another explorer, Warren Ferris, mentioned seeing three or four log cabins at the fort, something Carson didn't report. In 1838 mountain man Joe Meek described it as a large and substantial fort, but said that it was no longer in use.

Old-timers and Indians who lived in that part of the Uintah Basin always referred to the ruins as Old Fort Kit Carson, so until the mystery of its origin is solved, that seems to be as good a name as any. Over the years flooding by the Green River has nearly obliterated its location, leaving only foundations, the outline of its walls, and a deep hole believed to have been a well. It's a ghostly place today.

### FORT THORNBURGH

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### THE TREASURE OF DIAMOND MOUNTAIN

A fort which causes some confusion today is Fort Thornburgh because there were actually two Fort Thornburghs, both in Uintah County and both named for Major T.T. Thornburgh, who was killed in the Meeker Massacre in 1879. The original Fort Thornburgh was built near the present-day Ute Indian trading post at Ouray on the Green River, in 1881. Floods on the Green soon proved its location to be a poor one. Only a year later a second fort was built 3 miles northwest of Vernal near the confluence of Ashley Creek and the Green River.

The second Fort Thornburgh sat on higher ground and was well built. There were two traders, J.B. Adams & Company and Seymour & Company, but Sadler's Saloon was more popular with the troops. Pioneer settlers at Ashley Center also built a small fort where present-day Vernal now stands. It was seldom used, though, for after the Meeker Massacre there were seldom hostilities between the settlers and the Utes.

Not far from Fort Thornburgh there is something strange on Diamond Mountain. It really isn't a treasure, and it's not a lost mine either. I don't know exactly what to call it, but it could be worth a lot of money.

In the fall of 1871 two wily old prospectors named Phillip Arnold and John Slack planned a bunco scheme so elaborate it fooled the most knowledgeable mining men and the most hard-hearted bankers of the time. Like most good frauds, it cost a lot of money to set up.

Arnold and Slack had made some money from their prospects, about \$50,000, but they were after a lot more, with as little work as possible. They went to Amsterdam, Holland where they purchased a sack of rough, uncut diamonds. Then they went to a desolate corner of Brown's Park north of where Fort Thornburgh would later be built and carefully planted the

diamonds all over the un-named mountain. They placed the rough gems in rock crevices, along ledges and even on ant hills and gopher mounds. The bait set, they were ready to spring the trap.

In February, 1872 Arnold and Slack walked into William Ralston's Bank of California at San Francisco, looking like two prospectors just in from the diggings. Unshaved and dirty, they presented a leather poke of the type used to carry gold dust to the teller, and told him they wanted it locked in the most secure vault. The teller, expecting to see the usual gold nuggets, opened the bag and had to ask what the odd looking glassy crystals were. When told they were diamonds, he called Banker Ralston, for no one there had ever seen a diamond in the rough.

Ralston almost fainted when he saw the gems. No sooner were Arnold and Slack out of sight than he called in an expert who examined the stones and reported they were of the highest quality. Ralston had the two prospectors brought to his office where he tried to learn where the diamonds came from. Arnold and Slack played it cagey, telling Ralston they didn't need him, for they knew where there was a diamond field worth millions. After several more meetings they reluctantly accepted \$300,000 for part interest in their diggings. They agreed also to take an expert chosen by Ralston to their diggings.

Henry Janin, an expert gemologist recommended by Tiffany's of New York, accompanied the two old prospectors to their mine. They travelled on the newly completed Central Pacific to a point in the desert of southern Wyoming. After unloading their horses, the three men rode south into the Uintah Mountains. Janin was blindfolded the last few miles of the trip. There, among the sagebrush and cedars, Janin had no trouble finding all the gems he wanted. In addition to diamonds he found rubies and sapphires as well!

Upon their return to San Francisco, Janin told banker Ralston the sky was the limit, and Ralston immediately incorporated the San Francisco & New York Mining Company, and began selling millions of shares across the country and in Europe. He even gave Arnold and Slack another \$300,000 to tide them over until the dividends started rolling in!

By sheer coincidence, an expert geologist named Clarence King was working with the Geological Survey in the Uintah Mountains and heard rumors of the great diamond field. What bothered King was his professional knowledge that diamonds, rubies and sapphires never occur in the same formation. Following the prospector's trail, King found the salted diamond field. Using a microscope, he discovered that some of the planted gems had been cut on a lapidary wheel. The scam exposed, he telegraphed banker Ralston to tell him his great diamond mine was a fraud!

When news of the gigantic swindle hit the newspapers there was a run on the Bank of California, with cries for Ralston's scalp from investors across the coun-

try. William Ralston, the richest man in California, committed suicide. Arnold and Slack took their \$600,000 and disappeared, but not for long. Arnold went to his home town in Kentucky where he was killed in a fight with a neighbor. Slack surfaced in New Mexico where he lived alone and died a pauper. No trace of the \$600,000 was ever found.

Almost any road map will show you the way to Arnold and Slack's salted diamond mine north of Fort Thornburgh. It is rough country frequented only by sheepherders and deer hunters, who occasionally still find diamonds where they were planted more than 100 years ago. You could find a diamond or maybe even a ruby or a sapphire, and they're worth a lot more now than they were when Arnold and Slack hid them. Their gem mountain is shown on almost all maps, so it's easy to find. It's called Diamond Mountain!

### FORT DESERET

Fort Deseret, located 10 miles southwest of Delta in Millard County, must hold the record as the fastest built fort in the west. Made of adobe mud mixed with straw, it was erected in 18 days by 93 men divided into two competing teams. It was 550' square with walls 10' high that tapered from a thickness of 4' at their black lava rock base to 1½ feet at the top. Fort Deseret was in active use during the Blackhawk War of 1868-69. Once, a party of 45 men traveling south from Tooele raced Chief Blackhawk and a band of howling Indians from Pack's Bottom to the fort. Once safe inside, the battle became a standoff.

A settlement known at different times as Lake Town and Crofton was established 12 miles to the west in 1874. It boasted only nine families, but was a favorite camping place for Indians, and at times 500 may have camped there. Like so many early desert settlements, a lack of water hastened its end. Few people today have heard of it, so it might be a good place to look for relics, especially Indian arrowheads.

On October 26, 1853 Captain J.W. Gunnison and 7 of his 11 men were killed by Indians in a narrow river bottom 6 miles west of where Fort Deseret was later built. Of the four men who escaped the massacre, two led a burial party back to the scene ten days later. Coyotes had eaten the bodies and strewn bones over a wide area. Capt. Gunnison's body could only be recognized from a few pieces of white hair still clinging to the skull. That tragedy had occurred during the Walker War. To prevent similar incidents during the Blackhawk War, Fort Deseret was built. Today the walls of Fort Deseret still stand, but each year's rains are slowly melting them away.

### FORT SANFORD

Silas Sanford Smith was a Major in the Iron County Militia, and in his honor Fort Sanford was named. It was built by Major Smith's 76 man company in 1866, a half mile east of the Sevier River on the south side of Sanford Creek, 8 miles north of Panguitch. Its purpose was to offer protection from raiding Indians to the settlers of the Sevier River Valley. Unlike most forts whose log walls were laid horizontally, Fort Sanford's



The walls of old Fort Deseret still stand after more than 100 years. -Utah Historical Society-

were built of cedar posts standing stockade style, side by side 8' above the ground. They enclosed five acres of ground where livestock could be protected during attacks. Around the stockade a deep ditch was dug to prevent its walls from being scaled by attackers.

Fort Sanford had been intended as a defensive fortification, but when the Blackhawk War flared up, it proved to be of little value. The nearby towns were abandoned, leaving the fort an isolated outpost far from the nearest help. After a siege in which an Indian was killed and a defender wounded, a decision was made to abandon the fort. They planned to use the fort again when the war ended. Instead, the settlers along the Sevier River gathered together at Panguitch and the other large cities, and left Fort Sanford to the ravishes of time. Its cedar log walls were used to build corrals and cabins. Only through careful searching can its site be found today.

### FORT SCIPIO

The original Scipio was established 2½ miles south of present-day Scipio in 1857. Originally it was called Round Valley and later Graball. At the beginning of the Blackhawk War in 1866, a fort with adobe mud walls was built around the little settlement. The story of how Fort Scipio was named is itself interesting. Old-timers say that not long after it was built Brigham Young visited there and asked what name the settlers had given their fort. One of those present was Scipio Kenner, and as a joke someone said that it was Scipio's fort. The prophet agreed that that was a good name for the fort, and it stuck. Others say that Brigham Young named it for Scipio Africanus, a famous Roman general.

A log schoolhouse was built there, followed by a general store, where tea sold for a dollar a pound. It must not have been very tasty, for there was no drinking water at the fort except that obtained from an open irrigation ditch. The poor water was responsible for a great deal of illness. When the Indian troubles ended the move was made to the present site of Scipio. Most of the original log cabins were moved from the fort to the new location, leaving nothing but an adobe wall to mark the fort's site. A century of weather has reduced them to a mere outline.

### FORT SODOM & ITS NEIGHBORS

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#### THE POTTER GANG CACHE

Fort Sodom was located 2 miles north of Goshen in Utah County. When it was built in 1857 its adobe walls enclosed two acres, with rows of cabins built along the inner walls. During the tense days after the Walker War it served as protection for the settlers of southern Utah County. After Chief Wakara died, it was seldom used. With the Indian problems over temporarily, Fort Sodom was abandoned, and its settlers moved to several nearby communities.

Sandtown was established in 1859 1 mile southeast of the fort, while Mechanicsville was started across the creek in front of the fort. Both settlements lasted only a few years. Poor soil was the reason for their demise. Goshen soon became the principal town of the valley, and attracted people from each of the abandoned villages.

Juan Lopez was a dashing caballero who dressed like a Spanish Don and flew into a rage if anyone called him a Mexican. He rode with the Ike Potter gang, rustling, robbing and killing, from Utah Valley to the Wyoming line. When Potter was killed in Coalville in 1867, Lopez assumed leadership of the gang. He cached much of the gang's loot in Spanish Fork Canyon, just across the valley from Fort Sodom.

Lopez moved the gang's base of operations from the Cache Cave in Echo Canyon to the high mountains between Heber Valley and Spanish Fork Canyon. With his renegade Indians and deserters from Camp Floyd, Lopez would ride down from secret hideouts on Mt. Timpanogos or in Spanish Fork Canyon to raid Mormon villages or army supply trains. Lopez, like Ike Potter before him, kept all the gold and silver the gang stole, and gave his Indian allies only stolen livestock and supplies. Except for a few dollars for whiskey, he offered the deserters nothing but a place to hide.

Finally the army became fed up with the gang's raids and dispatched a troop of soldiers from Fort Douglas to break up the gang and bring Lopez in, dead or alive. The army caught up with the gang in a mountain valley on the west side of Mt. Timpanogos. From there they chased them along the foothills of Utah Valley and into Spanish Fork Canyon, where most of the gang was killed.

The army deserters were questioned at length, but all said that Lopez alone knew where the gang's cache was hidden, and that he was trying to reach it when he was killed. They searched the area where Lopez died, but failed to turn up the cache.

The cache is still hidden somewhere in Spanish Fork Canyon. In 1974 a man from Springville who was loading a pickup truck with black soil dug up some old coins, several of them Spanish, that dated back to 1790. Of course, it's possible they were lost by early Spanish travelers, but the following year a deer hunter found three more coins when he stopped to rest under a ledge of rock. I wonder what could be found with a metal detector?

### FORT RAWLINS

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#### A SPANISH MINE FOUND

The little remembered army camp of Fort Rawlins was located 2½ miles north of pioneer Provo City, on the north bank of the Timpanogos (Provo) River. It was established on July 30th, 1870 with two companies of the 13th Infantry from Fort Douglas. Funds were never appropriated for barracks or other quarters, so



the troops lived in tents with dirt floors. They didn't even have heat stoves until mid-winter.

Fort Rawlins was a thorn in the side of Utah Valley Mormons, most of whom refused to associate with the troops or let them come into town. For that and other reasons, desertion and drunkenness were constant problems for the fort's commanding officer, Capt. Nathan Osborne. During the short life of his command, one-third of his men were court-martialed for being drunk on duty.

Capt. Osborne could not obtain necessary winter supplies for his men from the army, and Provo merchants refused to sell him anything. In frustration, he often took severe disciplinary actions against his rebellious troops. For minor infractions he ordered men enclosed upright in coffins, only 12" deep and 20" wide! Because of low morale, stemming from their primitive living conditions and the severe punishments meted out to them, Capt. Osborne's troops staged a riot on September 22nd, 1870.

Drunken, swearing soldiers armed with loaded rifles and pistols charged into Provo City during the night, man-handled citizens and shot up the town. They were taking out months of pent-up frustration against their Mormon neighbors. Several forced their way into one Bishop Miller's home and threatened to kill him. Thomas Fuller was cut with a bayonet and other soldiers tried to set fire to the church. The following morning they staggered drunkenly back to camp.

Unbelievably, Capt. Osborne failed to report the riot or the damage done by his troops, and his commander, General C.C. Augur first learned of it by reading a newspaper account. Investigation of the riot brought to light Capt. Osborne's severe punishments and he was relieved of command in April, 1871. He and his troops were fined \$308 for damages to Provo City. Capt. Osborne was replaced by Capt. Robert Nugent. Two weeks later he received orders to abandon the fort. Everything that could be moved was hauled to Fort Douglas, but no doubt a lot of coins and other relics were lost in the dirt floors of its tent barracks.

Upon their arrival, Mormon pioneers in Utah Valley were told by the Indians that bearded miners and soldiers wearing iron shirts had worked gold mines in the mountains hundreds of years before. The Indians told how the Spaniards dug for gold in Pick-quanah-we-woods, their name for Spanish Fork Canyon. The Provo River of Utah Valley has two main forks, Spanish Fork and American Fork, the latter named by "American" settlers. The Spanish Fork was not named, as some suppose, by Mormon settlers, but was called that by even the earliest explorers. It is shown as Spanish Fork on Fremont's map of 1845, two years before the Mormons arrived in Utah and five years before Utah Valley was settled.

Even after the Mormons came to Utah Valley, Spanish and Mexican miners visited the area. Pack trains of ore being brought from the mountains were

commonly seen until about 1860, and many pioneer diaries mention them. The journal of Mormon V. Selman describes such a sight in 1852. "A Spanish pack train came down the Provo River and camped near our place for a few days to rest their pack animals. Those pack animals were loaded with very heavy packs which were not very large, but it was all those mules could carry. The men kept an armed guard at their camp, and no one was allowed near. They stayed a few days before going south." Other diaries and journals describe similar pack trains carrying cargo so precious that guards kept anyone from getting near them.

A few early settlers looked for the Spanish mines, but none were found until 1957 when deer hunter Clark Rhoades stumbled onto an ancient shaft hidden in heavy oak brush. It was where the Indians had always said it was, on the first side stream (Diamond Fork) that empties into the Pick-quanah-we-wood (Spanish Fork) River.

The old mine was dangerously caved in and wasn't explored until Rhoades's son Gale and his cousin Gary reopened it. A second shaft was found only 20' from the first. One was 90' deep, and the other 120', and both followed the same ore vein. The shafts had been sunk into the mountain at a 45 degree angle. A series of steps had been cut to make climbing out with heavy ore packs easier. In excavating the shafts, several old Spanish shoulder yokes were found. They were made of cedar with a neck notch in the center and hooks on each end to attach leather ore sacks to.

When the shafts were excavated, a chamber was found at the bottom, and the diggers discovered that the floor of the chamber had a hollow sound. Digging carefully, a rotting log floor was removed and a heavy cross log was uncovered, grooved in the center where a rope of some sort had worn into it while lifting buckets of ore from the black vertical shaft below. Pieces of ore rich in gold were recovered, but the lower shaft was too dangerous to reopen with hand tools.

Rhoades learned that the shafts had been purposely filled in, not caved in by natural means. Their waste dumps were so overgrown with scrub oak that they could not be detected from even a few feet away. The two old mines found by Clark Rhoades were the same ones Indians said were worked by the "iron shirts" hundreds of years before.

When Father Escalante travelled down Spanish Fork Canyon in 1776 he was not unaware of minerals there, for he wrote in his journal, "The veins that are seen in the sierra appear to contain minerals." Escalante wasn't the first nor the last to recognize the mineral wealth of Spanish Fork Canyon. No doubt, other ancient mines are still hidden in its rugged depths. All you have to do is find them!

#### FORT HARMONY

Fort Harmony was built near the junction of Ash Creek and Kanarra Creek in Washington County.



southeast of New Harmony. It was founded in 1851 by a band of emigrants led by John D. Lee. Brigham Young said it was the best planned fort he had seen, and by 1854 it was the strongest fortification in Dixie. It was 300' square. Its east wall was 10' high and its west wall 16'. Both had a row of cabins built against their inner sides. There was a schoolhouse and a 100' deep well to insure a water supply during seige. Fort Harmony served as the county seat of Washington County until 1859.

The fort was in constant use until 1862 when a 28 day rain fell in January and undermined its walls. During the worst of the storm an alert was given to abandon the fort, but Lee refused to leave, claiming it would stand, even against a flood. During the night, swift flowing runoff water combined with an overflow from rain swollen Ash Creek undercut the fort's walls until they began collapsing. Still Lee refused to leave. Then, just before the first light of morning, a huge roof beam collapsed, its full weight falling across the bed of Lee's sleeping children, killing his son George and daughter Margaret Ann instantly.

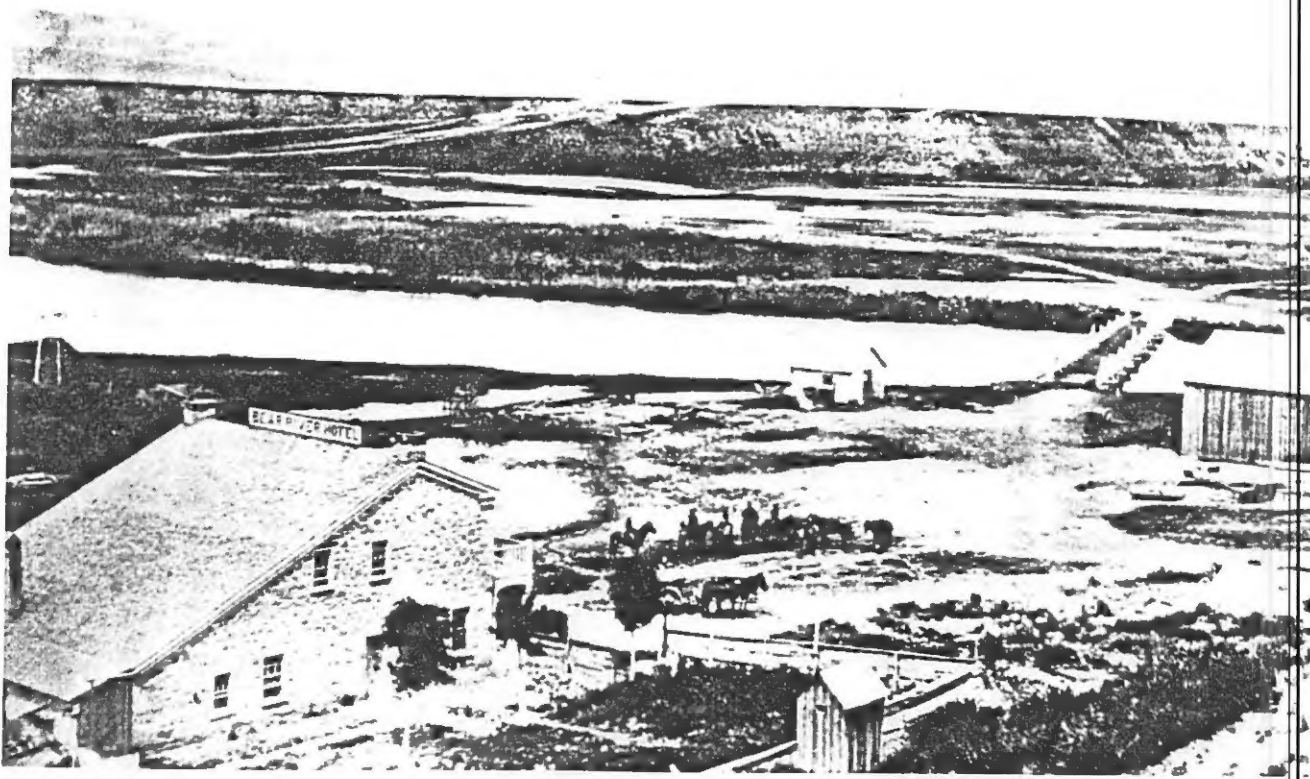
When the great rain ended and the flood waters subsided, a decision was made not to rebuild the fort. Some moved upstream to what would become New Harmony while others founded Kanarraville, 3 miles to the northeast. Today the old fort's four stone corners and the two stone pillars which stood at each side of its

heavy gates remain intact, and near its center a sunken hole that was its well can be seen. The inspiring view of the towering red spires of Kolob Canyon is still there, just as beautiful as it was when Fort Harmony was the best built fort in Utah and the pride of Dixie.

### CALL'S FORT & TREASURE RODE IN THE BOOT

Built in 1852, although some say it was 1855, Call's Fort was built by the brothers Homer, Omer and Anson Call at the foot of the Wasatch Mountains just west of U-69 between Brigham City and Honeyville. Brigham Young wanted it: "To protect the settlers of Bear River Valley and guard Zion's northern frontier." He was worried about threats from the federal government to send an army into Utah to "resolve the Mormon problem." When the Utah War finally broke out several years later, Call's Fort was too far north of the armies line of march to guard Zion's borders. It was 125' square with walls 8' high and 3' thick.

By 1858, 35 families were living at or near the fort. No battles were ever fought there against the army or the Indians. A schoolhouse was built at the fort in 1862. But Call's Fort's days were numbered. It would be only a few more years until the transcontinental railroad would be built, and Call's Fort would be far off the beaten path. With the arrival of the railroad, the Utah



George Witherell loaded the treasure onto a buckboard and headed east across the floating bridge on the Bear River.

War in the past, and Indian troubles ended settlers left the fort to build farms throughout the Bear River Valley. In time it was torn down, but by the side of the road 7 miles north of Brigham City, a large rock monument, built of stone taken from its walls, stands to mark its site.

In December, 1870 George Witherell buried one of Utah's biggest money caches between Corinne and Call's Fort. He was a stage driver on the Ben Holladay line from Ogden to Corinne. A few days before Christmas, 1870 four men boarded his stage at Ogden. They had a heavy trunk which was placed in the boot at the rear of the stage. Just south of Brigham City they were flagged to a stop by several tough looking riders who claimed to be law officers. They didn't show badges, but they did take the four passengers and their hand luggage from the stage, and waved Witherell on.

Due to the circumstances, Witherell forgot all about the trunk until he got to Corinne. His curiosity aroused, Witherell opened the trunk to look for identification, but was amazed to see that it was packed with bundles of paper money, while a small chest inside was full of gold coins. Not being above a little larceny himself, and knowing that his passengers were probably on their way to jail, Witherell loaded the trunk onto a buckboard wagon and drove off into the night.

Ed Neal, the stableman, later recalled that Witherell went east from town across the old floating log bridge toward Call's Fort. The old fort was no longer in use and Neal thought it unusual for Witherell to go that way. He also said it snowed all the time Witherell was gone. Two hours later he returned without the trunk.

At that point the "lawmen" who took his passengers from the stage arrived and demanded the trunk. Witherell swore he knew nothing about the trunk, and Neal later said that if he hadn't been present, he was sure they would have killed Witherell. They couldn't seem able to decide whether or not to believe him, and warned him not to try to leave town.

Scared of what had happened to his passengers, and certain the "lawmen" weren't real law officers, Witherell slipped out of town and rode across the mountains into Colorado where he met E.E. Wright and began herding sheep with him. He figured a sheep camp was a good place to hide until he could safely return and dig up the outlaw trunk. On September 18th, 1871 Witherell and Wright killed an old sheepherder named S.K. Wall for \$70 and a gold watch. A posse chased them to Sidney, Nebraska where they were arrested. Witherell still had Wall's gold watch with him. He arrived at the Colorado State Penitentiary at Canon City on January 3rd, 1872 to begin serving a life sentence.

After several escape attempts, Witherell was pardoned in 1887. He went directly to Canon City where he purchased a used six-shooter, got drunk in a back street saloon and killed a man in a drunken brawl. He was

seized and hung from a telegraph pole before lawmen could arrive. The secret of his buried cache near Call's Fort died with him.

About an hour's drive by buckboard across the Bear River from Corinne, a fortune waits to be found. The paper money may have rotted away, but the gold is as shiny and bright as ever. And it's worth a whole lot more than it was when George Witherell buried it in a shallow hole more than 100 years ago.

### HOYT'S FORT

Hoyt's Fort was located 300' southwest of the historical monument in front of the Mormon Church House at Hoytsville in Summit County. It was built during the Blackhawk War years of 1866-68. At first it was known as Fort Union, but when Samuel Hoyt built a home and grist mill nearby it was renamed Hoyt's Fort. During the worst of the Indian troubles, 25 families lived there. Cabins were built both inside and outside its walls.

Hoyt's Fort also served as a stage station for Kimball's Stage Lines and for the Gilmer & Saulsbury line. Only the shell of one of its buildings and the ruins of Hoyt's grist mill remain. They are on private property. The Utah State Historical Society is presently trying to preserve the fort as an historical place of interest.

### ROCK FORT

When Rock Fort was first settled as a farming settlement on the Weber River in Summit County in 1854 it was known as Crandall City. In 1860, with more people arriving daily, its name was changed to Enoch City. When the Blackhawk War threatened settlers during the late 1860's a rock wall 8' high was built around the entire town. This gave it still another name, Rock Fort. The fort soon boasted a schoolhouse that was 18' x 24' in size, built of red sandstone. There was also a combination post office and general store and an office used by its two stage companies, Kimball's and Gilmer & Saulsbury.

For many years an old recluse known only as "Dutch John," described as a "Homeopathic Doctor from Germany", lived in a dugout in the cedared hills above town. He had no farmground, livestock or other means of support, yet when someone became ill, he would mysteriously appear, carrying a pack of strange herbs, pills and potions, which he gave freely to the sick. He never asked for payment and would take food only if it was offered. After the community grew in size and had the services of a regular doctor, "Dutch John" disappeared.

When the Blackhawk War ended, the rock walls surrounding Rock Fort were torn down to provide stone for homes and businesses. In time the name Rock Fort became Rockport, a name it bore until Wanship Dam was built and flooded it with Rockport Lake. Before it went to its watery grave, Rockport had a

number of vigorous businesses, among them Seamon's General Store, Vicky's Shoe Shop and Casey & Vernon's Sawmill. At low water level old foundations and streets can be seen. Occasionally, century old coins and trade tokens are found along the submerged sidewalks. That's all that's left of Rock Fort.

### KINGSTON FORT

There were few places in pioneer Utah stranger than Kingston Fort. The settlement of Kingston was established near the mouth of Weber Canyon in 1853 by Thomas Kingston, the first Mormon Bishop of Weber County. It consisted of a church, a school, a bowery and two rows of log cabins. When Indians threatened, a wall was built around it, after which it was known as Kingston's Fort. The little town was abandoned when Brigham Young ordered the evacuation of all of northern Utah during the advance of Johnston's Army in 1857. It remained deserted until 1859 when the "false prophet" Joseph Morris and his followers resettled it.

Joseph Morris was an eccentric who believed he was chosen by God for exaltation. He joined the Mormon Church in 1849 and came to Utah in 1853, but attracted no special attention until 1859 when he claimed he was receiving divine revelations. When he claimed that he was chosen to replace Brigham Young as leader of the Mormon Church, his troubles really began!

When Young failed to surrender the reins of leadership to him, Morris started his own church, and took over Kingston Fort as his headquarters. By 1862 he had 600 fanatic followers who believed he was a modern Moses. They also believed his prophecy that the Second Coming and the end of the world were at hand. But it was when he imprisoned three men who failed to follow his orders that he got into trouble with the civil authorities as well as with Brigham Young. Friends appealed the illegal imprisonment to Judge J.F. Kinney at Salt Lake City, who immediately issued a writ ordering their release. When Morris refused to accept the order, stating he was an Angel of God and the only law on earth, his fate and that of the Morrisites was sealed.

On June 11th, 1862 Judge Kinney ordered Marshal Robert Burton, who was one of Brigham Young's officers in the Nauvoo Legion, and a 250 man militia to arrest Morris. On June 13th Marshal Burton placed two cannons on a bluff south of the fort and another at its west side. He then ordered Morris to surrender within thirty minutes. Morris refused, saying to his followers, "If you are faithful, your foes will be destroyed, and no harm shall come to you!" Marshal Burton ordered the cannon fired. In the first volley one man and two women were killed and several others were wounded.



The Hoyt Mansion at Fort Hoyt, sometimes called Fort Union.

There was no answer from the fort on that day or the next, when heavy rains halted all operations. On the 15th another volley was fired and another Morrisite killed. Again Morris was called upon to surrender. After several minutes a white flag was raised. Morris appeared at the gate of the fort, dressed in flowing white robes, but instead of surrendering called to his followers, "All who are willing to follow me through life and death, come on!"

Men and women ran to his side, and Marshal Burton ordered the cannon fired. Morris and two of his lieutenants, John Banks and Richard Cook, were blasted into eternity. Two women standing nearby were also killed.

Nearly one hundred men were captured and taken to Salt Lake City where seven were found guilty of manslaughter and the remainder fined \$100 each for resisting arrest. Governor Frank Fuller immediately pardoned all of them. The disheartened and leaderless Morrisites gathered up their families and meager belongings and left Kingston Fort forever. Most of them moved to Idaho.

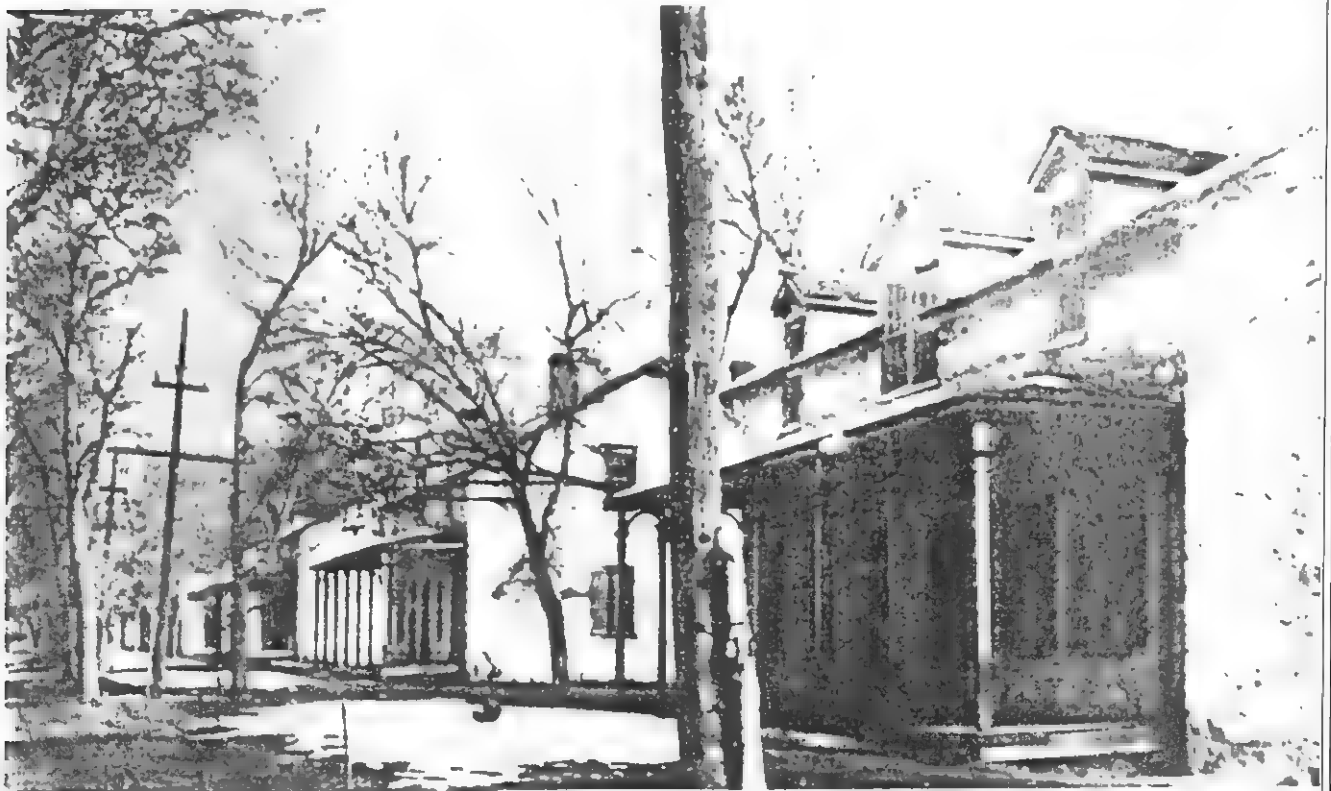
Kingston Fort slowly fell into ruin. Today Interstate 80 passes close by its site, just west of US-89 at the mouth of Weber Canyon. An historical marker stands near the site, but people living there don't talk about it much.

## FORT CAMERON & JOHN D. LEE'S LOST MINES

When it was established in 1872 Fort Cameron was known as The Post Of Beaver. It was renamed Fort Cameron on July 1st, 1874 when it was designated a regular army garrison as a result of the tragic Mountain Meadows Massacre. Named in honor of Col. James Cameron, a Civil War hero of the battle of Bull Run, it was home to the 8th Infantry under the command of Major John Wilkins, and consisted of an area 2½ miles square. It was located on the north side of the Beaver River, 2 miles east of Beaver City. It was a well built place of hand cut stone and mortar, that included 4 barracks, a commissary, a hospital and a row of officers' quarters.

The trial of the infamous John D. Lee, leader of the massacre at Mountain Meadows, was held at Fort Cameron. A jury found Lee guilty on September 20th, 1876, 19 years after the massacre. He was executed by a firing squad on March 23rd, 1877 at the place where he and other white men, dressed as Indians, killed 121 men, women, and children in September, 1857. Fort Cameron was disbanded on May 1st, 1883.

When the army left Fort Cameron, all of its buildings were sold to John R. Murdock who reopened them



Fort Cameron. The Post Of Beaver, during the 1870's. This was Officers' Row.





Only John D. Lee knows the secret of his lost gold, and he isn't telling!

as Murdock Academy, a branch of Brigham Young University. Several new and impressive buildings went up at that time. When Murdock Academy was closed in 1922 most of its buildings were dismantled for the stone they contained. Mormon churches at Milford and Minersville were built of that stone. Today several of the fort's buildings are in good repair, and can be seen at the edge of the city's golf course.

When John D. Lee was executed he took the secret of two lost mines and a gold cache with him to the grave. They are strange stories, where truth is stranger than fiction.

After Lee led the fanatics who massacred the desert travelers at the Mountain Meadows in 1857 he was a hunted man. For nearly 20 years he hid in the Grand Canyon where he had a secret silver mine as well as a place where he obtained gold nuggets, enough of both to support 18 wives and their families. There is no doubt of the mines' existence. Several times he was trailed almost to the mines before he spotted his trackers, and many people saw the gold he brought from the canyon, including his wife, Emma, who searched for the mine after Lee was executed.

While in hiding Lee lived with Emma at Lonely Dell, a God-forsaken refuge at Lee's Crossing on the

Colorado. For several years an adopted boy named Robert Hilderbrand lived with them at Lonely Dell. He would go with Lee into the maze of canyons, but was never allowed to see the mine. In later years Hilderbrand would say that he accompanied Lee to Soap Creek, where he would stay with the burros at a grassy glen. In two or three days Lee would return, carrying a heavy pack of gold nuggets. Hilderbrand was certain the gold did not come from a river placer, since it appeared to be broken from lava rock.

John Hance was an old desert prospector who often saw Lee in the canyons. He met him several times while he was carrying a heavy load of silver ore, not gold, coming up canyon from somewhere far below Soap Creek. His statements confirm that Lee's money rock came from at least two sources.

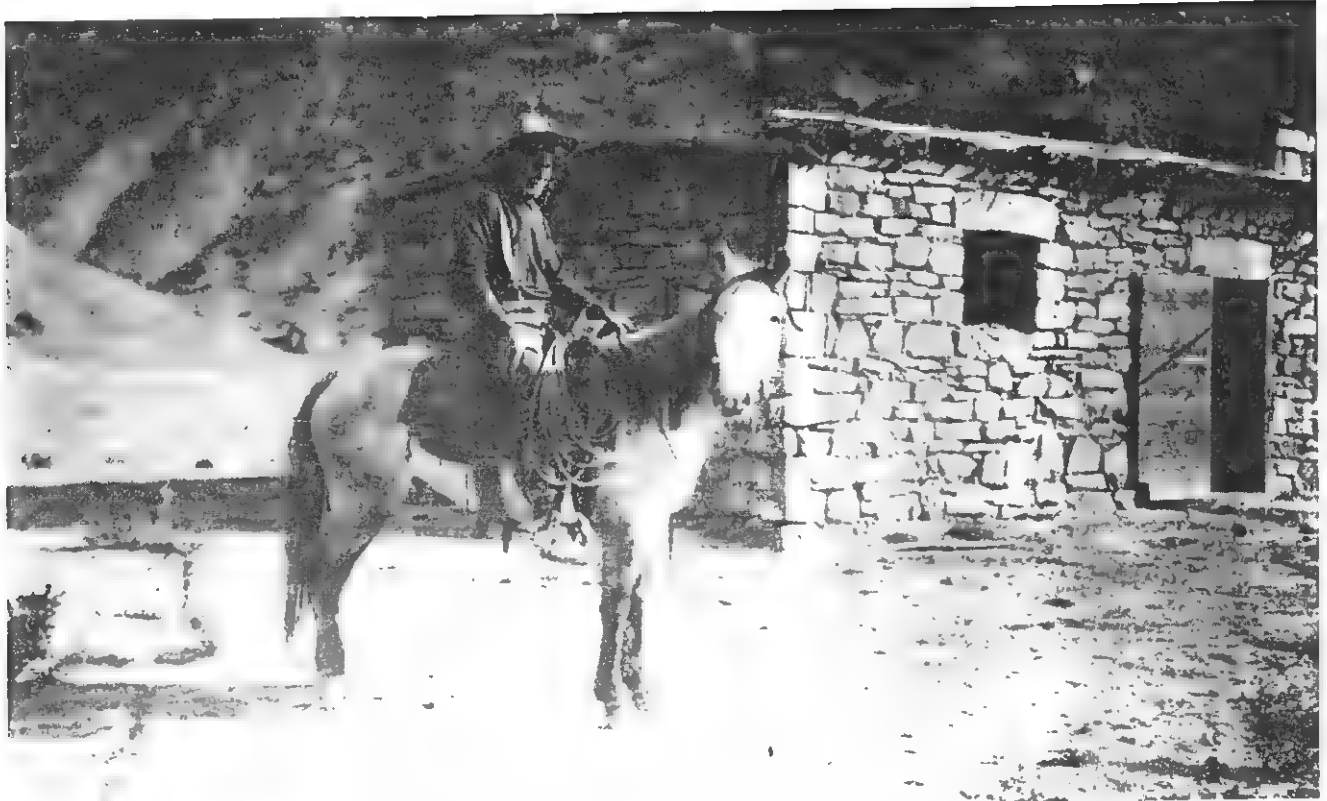
Many tried to follow Lee, but he knew the mysterious canyons better than anyone, and had no trouble losing them. Lee was later arrested while visiting one of his wives at Parowan, and was executed at Fort Cameron. Not long before he was arrested, Lee and Hilderbrand returned to Lonely Dell from one of his mines and cached a sack of ore under Emma's bed. After Lee was executed, Emma married Franklin French, who sold the ore for \$7,000!

French and Emma made many trips into the canyon searching for Lee's mine, but finally gave up and left Lonely Dell. Issac C. Haight, a participant in the massacre with Lee and also a hunted man, somehow obtained a small leather map which supposedly showed where Lee buried seven cans of gold, but in a summer of looking never found the cache.

In 1909 a lone prospector came to Rowland Rider's cow camp near the edge of the canyon in House Rock Valley. The prospector was unfamiliar with the country, yet asked questions about trails and landmarks in Soap Creek Canyon that only someone who had been there would know anything about. Rider gave the information asked for, and several days later the prospector returned to his camp. He had seven old rusty cans filled with gold! Rider remembered that the gold was rough, not water worn. When he asked the old prospector where he got it, the old-timer said, "Down there, where Soap Creek goes into the Colorado!"

Could the prospector of 1909 be the boy Robert Hilderbrand who followed Lee into the canyons long before? In 1909 he would have been in his fifties. There isn't any question that Lee had a mine, or possibly two, one silver and one gold.

If you want to look for Lee's mine, locate Soap Creek 12 miles downstream from Marble Canyon bridge. The canyon is a national monument now, so taking gold from it would be illegal. I'm not suggesting that anyone break the law, but if you happen to be hiking somewhere in Soap Creek Canyon and by accident come across a ledge of rotten lava rock where gold nuggets glisten in the sun, I don't think anyone would blame you for taking a few pockets-full!



Rowland Rider at Lee's Ferry in 1909. He saw Lee's gold! -Rowland Rider-

### FORT PEARCE & THE LOST PARTNERS' PLACERS

Fort Pierce Wash, southeast of St. George in Washington County, was the site of Fort Pearce, built to protect the trail from Dixie to the Arizona settlements. Today its name and that of the dry wash where it was located are shown on nearly all maps as Fort Pierce. This is an error, for both the fort and the wash were named for John D.L. Pearce, an early-day settler and trail blazer. Originally, the trail south went from St. George to the Washington Field then through Warner Valley along Pearce Creek to the fort. Then it continued east up a dugway over Hurricane Fault and on to Short Creek and Pipe Springs. The fort itself was small, only 30' square, but it was sturdily built of stone and had a high tower equipped with portholes for riflemen.

Fort Pearce was intended to be only a way station where travelers could defend themselves from Indians. Workmen hauling timber and stone used in construction of the Mormon Temple at St. George often sought refuge there. A stone corral with walls 5' high protected their livestock from raiding Indians. It was located atop a bare ridge near a small pool of water at the base of a cliff. It had a roof of cottonwood poles, but they have

been burned by campers over the years. Today the ruins of Fort Pearce keep silent guard over the old Mormon Trail.

Legally the Arizona Strip, that narrow slice of land south of Fort Pearce and the Utah State line, but north of the Grand Canyon, belongs to Arizona. By any other standard it is part of Utah, commercially, geographically and historically. It was settled by Mormon pioneers and almost all of its small population is still Mormon. Utah has made several attempts to annex the strip, but those efforts have always failed. Thus, while the lost partners' gold placer may technically be in Arizona, its story is really a Utah treasure tale.

Three casual prospectors from St. George, who herded cattle near Fort Pearce and Windsor Castle, now known as Pipe Springs, found a rich gold placer on Kanab Creek, not far from the Colorado River. Working part-time while herding cattle, they recovered three fruit jars of nuggets, using sluice boxes built from driftwood found along the river. When they returned to St. George they were severely rebuked by their Bishop for engaging in mining, which Brigham Young specifically forbade Mormons to do. The Bishop reminded them of Brigham Young's warning, that "Some men have a golden God in their hearts, but every dollar earned by mining has cost one hundred dollars. It is gold that causes murders, anarchy, vigilance committees and idleness!" The three partners lost their jobs



Fort Pearce, intended to be a temporary outpost, has survived more transient neighbors. -Utah Historical Society-

with the Mormon owned Windsor Cattle Company and were so shamed in the community that they never returned to the placers, nor would they discuss them with anyone.

Finally, the partners died and their transgressions were forgotten. Times changed as well. Eventually it was no longer a sin for a Mormon to engage in mining. Old-timers remembered the bottles of gold nuggets brought back from the partners' placers, and thus their story was kept alive. In 1941, Louis Arnold, who gave his address only as St. George, was herding sheep along Kanab Creek where the three partners had herded cattle long before. One day he discovered some old log sluice boxes half buried in the sand. Dry panning along the wash he found many small gold nuggets, so he wrote to the Kingman County recorder's office for proper procedures for filing a claim. In his letter Arnold stated the placers were 3 to 5 feet deep and more than 500' long, and were located about 74 miles from the Mt. Trumbull Community, a ghost town 65 miles south of St. George.

Kingman County replied to Arnold's letter, mailing location forms to P.O. Box 353, St. George, Utah, but the letter was never claimed. No one in St. George had ever heard of Louis Arnold, nor was he ever heard from again, although his letter to Kingman County is still on file.

There's not much doubt that Arnold discovered the same gold placers on Kanab Creek that the three partners had found 70 years earlier. Since then no trace

of the placers has been found. Remember, Kanab Creek and its countless side canyons cover a big piece of country. Arnold said the placers were 74 miles from the Mt. Trumbull Community, but he didn't say if that was by trail or as the crow flies. It could be the long way if the crow had to walk and lead a pack burro.

#### HAMILTON FORT

In 1852 Peter Shirts, second only to Jacob Hamblin as a colonizer of southern Utah, built a log cabin for his family on Sidon Creek, 5 miles southwest of Cedar City in Iron County. Shirts grubbed the head high sage from the sandy soil and turned irrigation water from the creek onto it. His crops grew rapidly under the hot Dixie sun, but Shirts knew there was a constant threat to his security from the wandering Indians whose lands he was claiming. To increase his chances by increasing his numbers, he offered part of his water rights to John Hamilton, Peter Fife and others if they would join him.

The little settlement was just beginning to look like a town when the Walker War began. At Brigham Young's directions, it was abandoned until the Indian threat was over. When the settlers returned to Sidon Creek they were joined by others. They all helped build a fort. When completed its 3' thick walls enclosed all the settlers' cabins.

For awhile the walled town was known as Fort Sidon and later as Fort Walker. Gradually it became

known as Hamilton Fort, in honor of John Hamilton, Mormon Bishop there nearly all his life. He was affectionately known to everyone as "Grandfather Hamilton." Hamilton Fort grew into an orderly little community of two story stone houses, but was located too far from the regular trail from Cedar City to the Washington County settlements. When Brigham Young visited there in 1869 he advised the residents to move. Reluctantly, they followed the prophet's advice, leaving their hard won homes to the few determined to stay behind. Before long nearly every home was deserted.

A half century later modern farming methods consolidated many of its small farms. With the advent of the auto, some people returned. In recent years several modern homes have been built giving the old settlement a new lease on life, even though modern road maps list its population as only 26. In sight of Interstate 15, Hamilton Fort dozes under the Dixie sun, a reminder of the Utah of 100 years ago.

### COVE FORT

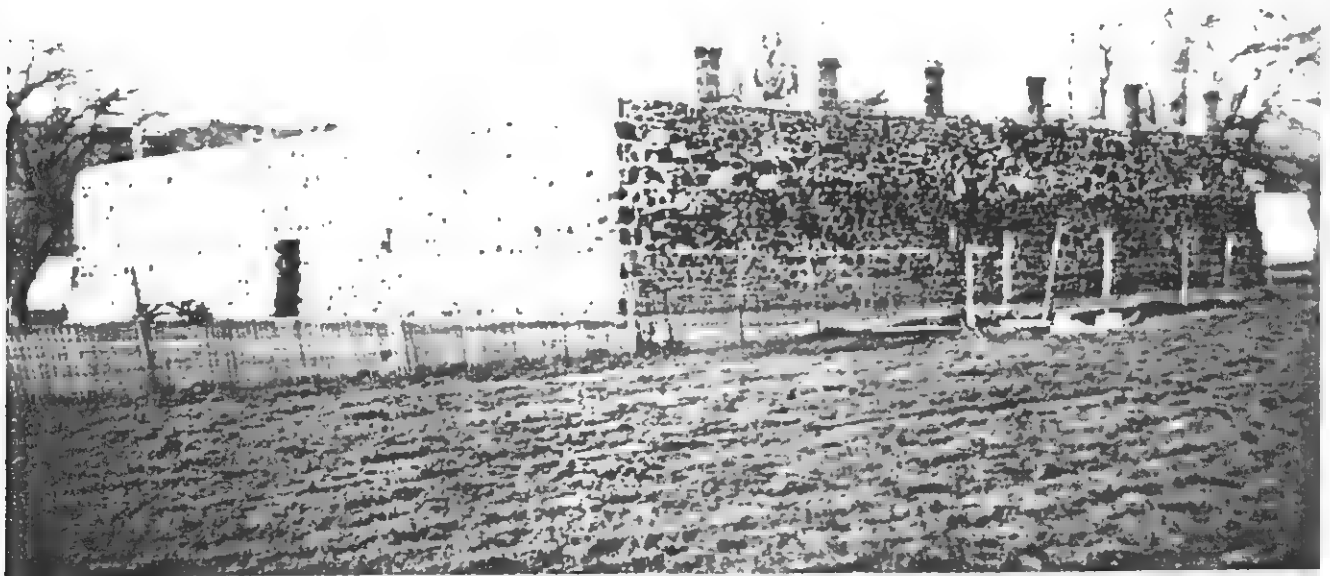
Historic Cove Fort was built in 1867 by Ira Hinckley and others under orders from Brigham Young, for the protection of travelers in central Utah. It was located at the junction of several heavily used pioneer trails and was on the Salt Lake City to Dixie route. Today it is just off U-4 in Millard County, 2 miles east of its junction with Interstate 15. It was built of black

volcanic rock, 100' square with walls 18' high and cost \$25,000. It had a high arched gate on its east side and contained 12 rooms built along its north and south inside walls. A deep well was dug in its center to insure ample water when under attack. About 500' to the east and 300' north a lone cottonwood and some cedar corral posts mark the site of Fort Wilden, built by Charles Wilden and his family in 1865.

Cove Fort has always been under someone's care, and today is the most perfectly preserved pioneer fort in the west. Its rooms contain many priceless treasures from pioneer days, while the open area within its walls contains old wagons, buckboards and other relics of the days when it served as a refuge for travelers on trails now forgotten. It's worth going a long way to see; don't miss it.

### CAMP FLOYD & DOBIETOWN

Camp Floyd was located in Utah County's Cedar Valley, almost midway between Tooele and Lehi. It was Utah's best known fort, as well as its largest. When first established in 1858 during the Utah War by army troops under the command of General Albert S. Johnston, it had more than 7,000 soldiers and camp followers, and was the largest army post in the country. The well known firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell hauled 16 million pounds of freight to the camp, which soon boasted 300 buildings of adobe, wood, brick and stone. Named in honor of John B. Floyd, President Bucha-



Cove Fort, probably the most perfectly preserved fort in the west.





The older of two cemeteries at Camp Floyd.

nan's Secretary of War, it was designated an Overland Stage station in 1859 and a Pony Express stop in 1860. Dobietown, also known as Frogtown, was located just beyond the camp, and was one of the roughest towns in the state, sporting every kind of saloon, bordello and gambling hall known.

But with the Utah War over, the "Mormon Problem" resolved, and the Civil War threatening in the east, Camp Floyd was abandoned. By then its name had been changed to Camp Crittenden, since Secretary Floyd had become an embarrassment to the administration because of his pro-confederate views. The camp's \$4,000,000 inventory of goods was sold for only \$100,000, with Brigham Young purchasing half the total. Flour, which cost the government \$570 a ton to get to Utah, was sold for \$11 a ton. By 1862 the gay times at Dobietown were gone and only 18 families remained.

Today the Stagecoach Inn at nearby Fairfield, built of stone from the camp's buildings, and a little cemetery located a half mile to the southwest, with many tombstones bearing only the words "Killed By Indians" are all that remain of Camp Floyd's past glory. There is a tradition around Utah Valley that when the army left Camp Floyd, they were unable to take all the munitions stored there. Not wanting firearms to fall into Mormon hands, thousands of rifles were secretly buried in a deep pit somewhere near the fort. That would be a cache worth finding!

### FORT MONTEZUMA & LEGEND OF THE LOST PISH-LA-KI MINE

In 1879 Peter Shirts built a cabin at the mouth of Montezuma Creek on the San Juan River. By the following year six more families had joined him. The settlement was named after the creek, which was called Montezuma Creek because it was believed the Aztec Emperor Montezuma was killed there. That year their first child was born there. One pioneer wrote, "Times are very hard, but we have plenty of white salmon to eat." Those "white salmon" were probably carp or catfish. The settlers were often attacked by Indians, and finally had to build a rock fort, which they called Fort Montezuma. In one week long battle they were unable to leave the fort, and a relief party was sent to their rescue, "To comfort them if they are still alive, if not, to bury them!" But the Saints persevered, and soon their growing settlement boasted a store operated by James Davis, a schoolhouse and a post office.

Living conditions at Fort Montezuma were harsh at best. There was little farmable ground along the river, and the high water often flooded what there was. In 1883, in an unusual policy change, Mormon authorities granted the settlers permission to leave their "mission." A few left, but most remained. Then, in August,

1884, two popular young men from Fort Montezuma were ambushed by Indians on a rocky ridge in view of the fort. Their attackers only wounded the men, and then allowed wild dogs to tear them apart as their horrified families looked helplessly on. Their tragic death was the final straw for the weary settlers, and soon afterwards they moved to Bluff, 19 miles downstream, "Poorer in worldly goods, but richer in wisdom."

The walls of Fort Montezuma are gone now, but by the side of Montezuma Wash, on the San Juan, a trading post by that name remains. On a quiet night, if you listen closely, you might hear the howling of a pack of Indian dogs running along a rocky ridge in the shadow of the old fort.

One of the most intriguing lost mine mysteries is that of the Lost Pish-La-Ki Mine, better known as the Merrick & Mitchell Mine. In 1863 U.S. Army troops with Kit Carson as their scout drove the Navajo Indians from southeastern Utah onto a prison-like reservation at Bosque-Redondo, New Mexico. A few Indians escaped capture, among them Chief Hoskininni's band, who took refuge for six years on Navajo Mountain, south of the San Juan River and north of the Arizona border.

That the Navajos had a secret silver mine on sacred Navajo Mountain is beyond doubt. Many references can be cited, but the most revealing is a personal interview in 1939 between 82 year old Hoskininni Begay, son of Chief Hoskininni, and Utah historian Charles Kelly. In brief, Hoskininni Begay said, "One day father brought some silver rocks into camp, and found they were so soft he could shape them without melting. He and six others took much silver, which was made into ornaments. In those days all silver was made smooth without design."

"When we came from the mountain we had much silver, and were the richest of all Navajos. When the white man saw all our silver ornaments, they wanted to hunt for our mine, but father would not allow it, and none of the old men who knew where it was told any white man, or even another Navajo. I myself do not even know where it is."

But prospectors did sneak onto the reservation, and some of them found the Navajos' sacred Pish-La-Ki Mine. In 1870 John Merrick copied an old Spanish map at Monterey, which revealed a silver mine worked by conquistadores and their Indian slaves 200 years before. Merrick organized a party of Californians, and by following the Old Spanish Trail eastward across Comb Wash and the San Juan River, they located the old mine. The date 1661 was carved on the sandstone cliff above its entrance.

John Merrick and his partners reopened the old shaft and removed a large quantity of nearly pure horn-silver before the Indian descendants of the slave laborers who overthrew the Spanish in 1680 attacked them along the Virgin River. All were killed except Merrick, who made his way to California. He vowed never to

return, and gave his prized map to his son Robert on the condition that he not attempt to go to the mine until the Navajos were under army control.

In 1879 young Merrick began his search teamed with Hearndon Mitchell, son of the trader at Fort Montezuma. With his father's map and directions they easily located the mine and loaded a burro train with silver. Neither was seen alive again! The March 16th, 1880 issue of the *Rocky Mountain News* reported that their bodies had been found by Cass Hite in Monument Valley, one each at the foot of two towering stone monuments located about three miles apart. Empty cartridge cases along the valley floor outlined the running fight they had with the Indians before being killed. The carcasses of their silver laden burros were found nearby. The two towering buttes where their bodies were found are still known as Merrick and Mitchell Buttes.

Hoskininni Begay told Kelly that Merrick and Mitchell were killed by Utes, not Navajos, and added, "My people have been blamed for their killing, but it is not true. Whenever one of our people die, their silver is buried with them, so now little of the silver of Pish-La-Ki remains. I myself have had eight wives, and all of my silver is buried with them."

Navajo Mountain is still the Navajos' sacred mountain, from which white men are forever restricted. So if you decide to follow Merrick & Mitchell's lost pony tracks to the Pish-La-Ki Mine, stop to look at the great Merrick and Mitchell buttes in Monument Valley. Some say their blood still stains the desert sand bright red on the lost trail to Pish-La-Ki!

## OGDEN AREA FORTS

&

### THE LOST McDONALD MINE

Many present-day cities in Utah were born as pioneer forts, but Ogden is unique in that it is built upon the ruins of four different ones. When the pioneers arrived in Utah, trapper Miles Goodyear had already built Fort Buenaventura on the Weber River just south of present-day 24th Street. Brigham Young purchased Goodyear's Fort for \$1,960 in gold and placed James Brown in charge of the Ogden Stake of the church, after which Goodyear's Fort was known as Brown's Fort.

Farr's Fort was built in 1850 at the mouth of Ogden Canyon, where Lorin Farr had located his grist mill a year earlier. It enclosed only five acres, but provided a place of refuge during Indian scares. Bingham's Fort, which grew into Lynne, was located north of 2nd Street and west of Washington Blvd. on the banks of the Ogden River. Built in 1853, its walls enclosed 40 acres. Because of its name it is sometimes confused with Fort Bingham, a small stockade built in 1864, 10 miles east of Tooele near the head of Bingham's Creek, in Salt Lake County. Mound Fort was located between present-day 9th and 12th Streets and west of Washing-

ton Boulevard, on the north side of the Ogden River. In 1854 a 9' wall was built around it. In 1884 it boasted a population of 100.

There is a lost gold mine almost in sight of Ogden's pioneer forts. Around 1900 a man named McDonald worked a gold mine in Taylor Canyon, the mouth of which can be seen in the rugged, rockslide cliffs at the head of 27th Street. McDonald must have been working more than just a mine in prospect, since he drove a tunnel more than 100' into the hard granite cliffs, and built a sturdy little log cabin where he lived for at least five years. A man doesn't do that if he's not making enough money to live on.

About 1911 McDonald was called to California. He asked friends to keep an eye on his property, and said he would be back soon. But he didn't return until 1937! When his two sons brought him back to Ogden, he was old and very sick. He had intended to take them to his mine, but was too feeble to climb the canyon. He camped in a tent near the canyon's mouth while his sons hiked day after day, searching for their father's lost mine. Finally they gave up their search for what has been known ever since as the Lost McDonald Mine and returned to California.

About a mile and a half up Taylor Canyon, past the first side gulch to the left, there is a little yellow mine dump hidden in the oak brush. Some say it is the Lost McDonald Mine. Over the years its entrance has caved in and rockslides from the mountain above have almost covered it. But there's a piece of the puzzle that doesn't seem to fit in. McDonald's cabin is much farther up canyon and on the opposite side of the creek. There's not much left of it, and it's very hard to find. But if the little yellow dump was his mine, why did he build his cabin so far from it?

Thus, it could be that the Lost McDonald Mine isn't lost at all, and then again, maybe the yellow dump mine wasn't the real mine. It seems that his sons would have found it with little trouble. If you hike to the top of Taylor Canyon, an almost impossible climb over nearly vertical cliffs and dangerous rock slides, you will arrive at the head of Cold Water Canyon. An old sheepherder I know has picked up lots of pieces of gold float in Cold Water Canyon. It may be coincidence, but McDonald's cabin is closer to Cold Water Canyon than it is to the little yellow mine dump! Could it have been McDonald who dropped the pieces of gold ore the sheepherder found?

If you're a prospector, and have some time, and like to hunt in rough country, you might examine Cold Water Canyon. Surely McDonald didn't spend six years of his life in the canyon, build a solid cabin, and then come all the way from California as a dying man to show his sons where gold was not hidden. There must be something there. There must be!

## SOME SMALL FORTS & THE LOST PARIA GOLD

In December, 1854 Jacob Hamblin, Ira Hatch, William Henefer and others called to Dixie by the Mormon Church began building Fort Santa Clara in Washington County. It was located on the Santa Clara River 5 miles north of its junction with the Virgin River. Fort Clara, as it was always known in Dixie, was 100' square and built of "hammered rock," with walls 3' thick and 12' high. A traveler who visited there wrote, "It is built very substantial to thwart any purpose of an attack. The inside is partitioned off into 25 rooms, with rifle portholes in each. The doors all open to the center and there is only one opening where wagons can enter." Fort Santa Clara was the forerunner of today's city of Santa Clara.

Hamblin, who was known as the Buckskin Prophet, probably explored more of southern Utah than any other man and was instrumental in establishing a number of forts to protect the trails he blazed and to encourage settlement. One well known fort built by Hamblin was Fort Meek, established in 1869 northeast of Kanab in Kane County, named for a Mormon Bishop who was traveling with Hamblin.

Some early forts which became today's cities included Fort Utah, which became Provo City, Fort Peteetneet, now Payson, Fort Louisa which became Parowan and Fort Johnson, now Enoch in Iron County.

On the Colorado River near the extreme northwest tip of San Juan County there was a fort shown on the earliest maps as Old Fort Bottom. The earliest trappers used it, but it was old even then, probably built by Spanish explorers or miners.

Pioneer Fort Wah Weap was built in 1869 to guard the Paria Crossing of the Colorado, a place favored by Navajos to ambush travelers. It witnessed the exploration of the Colorado by Major John Wesley Powell and the gold rush on Paria Creek. Long after Fort Wah Weap was abandoned, it witnessed a lone prospector strike it rich, but not wanting the treasures of the Paria known to all, it guarded the prospector's secret well, so well that his lost placer has never been located since.

After the short gold rush of the 1890's at Pahreah, Dake Train became a familiar sight around the Vermilion Cliffs country. An old-time prospector, he made his camp on Buckskin Mountain, southwest of Adairville, not far from Fort Wah Weap.

It was during the summer of 1896, after one of the violent sand storms which blow in from the pink coral sand dunes, that one of Joel Johnson's boys found Train wandering in the desert near Crescent Butte, badly dehydrated and more dead than alive. He was taken to Kanab where there was a doctor. Train slowly recuperated.

ated, and told the doctor how he had found a rich gold placer in a hidden box canyon just off Paria Creek. After the gold rush fiasco at Pahreah no one was anxious to listen to his story, but a search was made for his burro. Train's desert canary was found in Buckskin Gulch southeast of Crescent Butte, its pack saddle still intact. Inside it they found a copper kettle full of coarse gold nuggets!

Train explained that he was returning to Adairville from a narrow, slit-like side canyon in the Paria country when he became disoriented in a sudden sand storm. He fell and hit his head, and when he regained consciousness, his burro had wandered off. Visibility in the swirling dust was only a few feet, but he knew that if he kept walking north he would come to Paria Creek. Somehow he lost track of directions and in a brief break in the storm saw the outline of a lone butte far ahead. He staggered to where he was found by Johnson, near Crescent Butte on the east side of Johnson Creek.

After a week's rest, Train was well enough to leave Kanab, and headed back to his camp on Buckskin Mountain, and his diggings in the Paria country. Train had no trouble returning to the narrow box canyon where a small trickle of water seeped from a towering cliff. The tiny stream ran only a short way before it was lost in a sandy wash, but in its gravel bed there was plenty of coarse gold, and enough water to pan it.

For a month Train camped in his secret gold gulch, until his supplies ran out and feed for his burro was exhausted. For several weeks he had been aware that men were prowling around the Paria, probably trying to locate his camp. The abortive gold rush at Pahreah had brought a number of shady characters to

the area. With enough gold to fill two dutch ovens, he had no desire to meet any of them.

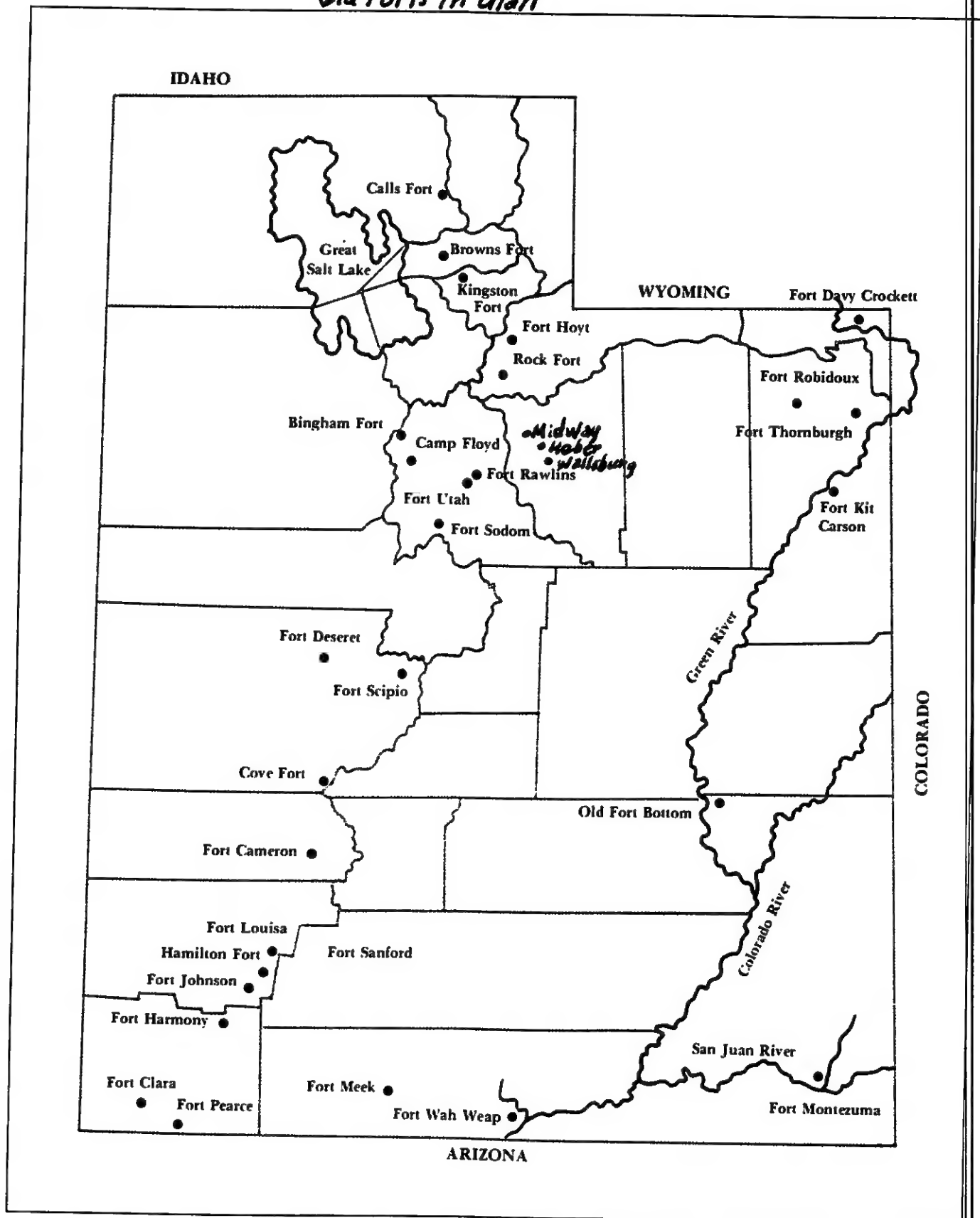
After two hard-cases passed within a mile of his camp, Train decided it was time to get out. Instead of returning to Adairville, he went down the Paria past old Fort Wah Weap and crossed the Colorado. He made his way to California where he cashed in his gold for over \$100,000 and bought a small farm near San Bernadino. There he married a widow with several children. Although his farm kept them alive, in time he felt the need for ready cash and decided to make a trip back to the Paria to get another stake for his old age.

In 1911 Train followed the trail across the Colorado and up Paria Creek, confident he could go straight to the narrow side canyon where a tiny spring bubbled from under the base of a sandstone cliff. For a month he searched every possible side canyon without finding a familiar landmark. Confused, he went back to his old camp on Buckskin Mountain and retraced his trail from there, but never found the secret canyon or a single grain of gold.

Completely bewildered, Train returned empty-handed to California. In 1916 he tried again. He returned to Kanab but no one there remembered him, and when he tried to tell them about his lost placer gold near the Paria, people would only look at him in pity and shake their heads, thinking he was another crazy prospector looking for gold that didn't exist. Train was an old man then and couldn't hike the desert anymore. He returned to his California farm, where until the day he died he told anyone who would listen about the lost gold of the Paria; gold he knew still waited somewhere south of Buckskin Mountain and east of Crescent Butte.



# Old Forts in Utah



George A Thompson:  
"Some Dreams Die"